

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art
Washington, D. C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, June 11: The outstanding soldier art of the American Army will go on exhibition in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., when the winning entries of a nation-wide contest are placed on view there July 4, Mr. David E. Finley, Gallery director, announced today.

The Washington exhibition will culminate an elimination contest in which each of the nine military service commands of the United States, the Military District of Washington and the U. S. Military Academy participated. Sponsored by the Special Services Division, Army Service Forces, the contest was devised as a means of stimulating interest in the recreational values of handicrafts and to provide an outlet for the creative talents of the large number of professional and amateur artists in khaki.

Two hundred and fourteen individual entries will comprise the Washington exhibition. These have been selected as the best of the entries viewed by military and civilian juries in the nine service commands and scores of military installations throughout the country.

National Gallery of Art

- 2 -

Entries include work in eight techniques: oil painting and tempera, water colors and gouache, mural design, sculpture, renderings, drawings, prints, and photographs. Winning selections in each class will be made by a jury of nationally famous art experts. The complete jury panel will be announced at a later date. Prizes in the national contest total \$800 in War Bonds.

The exhibit will be open from July 4 to Sept. 4.

The Army Arts Contest, first of its kind in American military history, was announced by the Special Services Division in December of last year. Service command headquarters sponsored contests within their own areas and an estimated 9,000 entries were submitted from posts, camps and other military installations.

Approximately 1,500 entries were selected for exhibition in service command elimination contests. Showings were made at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.; the Art Students League, New York; Museum of Fine Art, Dallas, Tex.; High Museum of Art, Atlanta Ga.; Chicago Historical Society, Chicago; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Md.; Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio; Joslyn Memorial, Omaha, Nebr., and the Museum of Art, San Francisco, Calif. From these 1,500 entries, 214 were selected for the exhibition at the National Gallery in Washington.

Art critics have been impressed by the quality and maturity of the soldier work. While much of it has been done by professionals, now in uniform, the greater part is the work of amateurs. Entry blanks reveal that in civilian life many of the soldier artists were farmers, clerks, dentists, bartenders, mechanics or belonged to any one of a score of other work-a-day occupations. Officers of the Special Services Division have stated that this contest has achieved the desired result of bringing art closer to many who in the past viewed it from remote and detached perspectives.

Not all the soldier artists turned to scenes closest at hand for subject matter. It is estimated that only about 50% of the total entries reflected a military influence, although some of the best did. Fully half depict peaceful, tranquil moods of civilian life.